

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - His Presence With Us

Sermon Title - What The Holy Spirit Does Through Us Part 1

Sermon Text - Acts 1:1-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Acts 2:1-18

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Full Sermon Notes

We just sang some very important lyrics. It was actually a prayer. Let's read the lyrics to the last verse and the bridge of that song... "Holy Spirit, You are welcome here, Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere, Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for. To be overcome by Your presence, Lord! Let us become more aware of Your presence! Let us experience the glory of Your goodness" That next to the last line is so deep and so important to understand... "Let us become more aware of Your presence." You see, God is present in this place. How do I know? God's Word assures us of this...

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

And let's not forget our body is a temple of The Holy Spirit, so He is here with us and will go with us when we leave this place. What we need is to become aware of His presence! Let's ask God to teach us to be more aware of His presence in our very lives and to learn what He wants to do through us! Let's pray!

"Father God, I ask you to let Your wonderful and amazing Holy Spirit speak to our hearts this morning, truth from Your precious Word to us! Let us hear Your voice. I pray my words will be directed by Your Spirit and will be based on a proper interpretation of Your most Holy Scripture! I humble myself under Your mighty hand this morning. I know I don't have a complete grasp on all Your Word or truth, but You know my heart desires to rightfully divide the word of truth before Your people here today! Anoint me with Your Spirit and wisdom and I will be quick to give You all the honor and glory! I trust You will guide us today! In Jesus' sweet name I pray and I believe...Amen!"

Are you all ready to learn some more about the Holy Spirit? The message today will be a little different from a traditional three points and a poem, although most of my messages are not so traditional! As we begin to look at what the Holy Spirit does through us I want to share with you some basic truths about the Holy Spirit that will help you as we look at The gifts of the Holy Spirit in the coming weeks. I will take you on a journey through Scripture to lay this foundation and then we will look at one of the spiritual gifts today that was spoken of and experienced when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Then next week we will look at several more of the spiritual gifts and probably wrap up the week after that with our series on the Holy Spirit. Our message today will have several main texts. The first is found in Acts 1:1-8 and from these verses we discover...

1. What The Holy Spirit Does Through Us: The Basics

Luke says...

Acts 1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach
Acts 1:2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Acts 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The Basics: Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit!

Did you notice our text said Jesus gave instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen? It is crucial that we don't miss what this means for us. You see, The Holy Spirit, He is the very presence of God in our lives. He is not some impersonal force, but He is in fact the very Spirit of God All-mighty! Jesus had been the presence of God with the disciples but He was about to ascend back to heaven and He had told them He would not leave them as orphans, but would send them another counselor or comforter! And they were not to leave Jerusalem until they had received this gift! Why was this so important and what does it have to do with Jesus giving instructions through the Holy Spirit! While Jesus was God the Son, He lived and taught at the direction of The Holy Spirit! He was conceived of The Holy Spirit, anointed by The Holy Spirit at His baptism and led by The Holy Spirit throughout His life! This was intentional! Jesus wanted us to learn from His life the importance of allowing His Holy Spirit to lead, and direct our lives and to work through us. Early on in His ministry, Jesus went to the synagogue and He was handed the scroll of Isaiah. He went to the place where it is written:

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

Luke 4:19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

If Jesus depended on The Holy Spirit, who are we to think we don't need The Holy Spirit to lead, guide and direct our words and our actions? We need The Holy Spirit to work in us and through us, but how does The Holy Spirit do this?

The Basics: The Holy Spirit Baptizes!

Our text says...

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

The greek word for baptize is Baptizo. Here's what it means in the greek...

Baptizo

- to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge
- to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water,
- to overwhelm

Baptism in The Holy Spirit is a supernatural and powerful experience that unfortunately has been relegated by many to a one time, mystical experience that some people say comes after salvation and is sometimes called the second blessing. First of all, I want to remind you again that you receive the Holy Spirit when you receive Jesus. Jesus comes to live within us when we repent of our sin and call on His name for salvation. Jesus comes into our hearts by way of the Holy Spirit. Don't forget the Bible says if we don't have the Spirit we don't belong to Christ. So you don't accept Jesus and at some later time get the Holy Spirit. Here's what I think happens many times: a person accepts Jesus and later comes to an understanding and awareness of The Holy Spirit who now dwells within them. This awareness may indeed have a powerful, even life changing, spiritual impact on the individual, but it's more of them realizing they have The Holy Spirit, rather than finally receiving The Holy Spirit!

But let me say this, being filled with the Holy Spirit, being baptized in the Holy Spirit, is something which should be repeated on a daily basis. Receiving the Holy Spirit is a one-time occurrence when you turn your life over to Jesus, but being immersed, submerged, cleansed, washed and even overwhelmed by the precious Holy Spirit of God, the very presence of God, should be a daily experience for a follower of Jesus! I don't know about you, but I desperately need every moment of every day for the Holy Spirit to baptize my thoughts, my attitudes, my actions, my agenda, my goals, my relationships, my work, my struggles, my everything! I don't want anything to overwhelm me but The Holy Spirit of our Holy God! I want to be aware of and influenced by and even controlled by the one power I can trust and that's the power of the Holy Spirit. I know He only wants what's best for me! What's good for me! What will honor God through me! I've mentioned this last week, but we must never forget...

Being baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit is not us getting more of the Spirit, but allowing the Holy Spirit to get more of us! In other words, as we yield more of our life to the direction of the Holy Spirit He is able to baptize, cleanse, and fill up every aspect of our life. Think of what could and would happen if you allowed the all powerful Spirit of Almighty God to bring His presence into your marriage, your family, your career, your thoughts, your dreams, your struggles, your

discouragement, your everything. This doesn't mean you won't have any more problems, but it does mean you won't face them by yourself anymore! And another thing that will happen when you allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with God's presence is that your desires will begin to change. Temptations and struggles will still be there, but their power in your life will be drastically reduced. Your purpose and desires in life will also begin to change and you will want to live for God by allowing The Holy Spirit to work through you to reach other people with the good news of Jesus!

The Basics: The Holy Spirit Empowers Your Witness

Jesus told the disciples this...

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

And we'll see something really special about this verse in a few minutes as we look into what The Holy Spirit does through us. But I want to just say this. When I was in college I worked at Sears in the maintenance agreement sales department. One of the guys in there was an atheist and he loved to debate with me and to pick on me. The Holy Spirit helped me love him anyway, and used our mutual interest in music to build a relationship. When I left that job one of our co-workers gave me a plaque that said..."If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer." On the back she wrote something to this effect: "Don't stop marching to the drumbeat you hear, you're making a difference."

But there's one more basic thing about The Holy Spirit you must know...

The Basics: The Holy Spirit is a Gift

Luke said this...

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Jesus said wait for the gift! The Holy Spirit is a gift from God to us! Sometimes we are tempted to focus on the gifts of The Holy Spirit when we should focus on the Giver of The Holy Spirit! Not that the gifts are unimportant, they are, and Paul even tells us that we can eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, but we should desire the giver of the gifts above the gifts! Seek Him first and let Him decide which gifts you need! The Church at Corinth had some difficulties keeping things in perspective in this regard and certain gifts of The Holy Spirit had become a pride thing for some of them so Paul gave them detailed instructions about the Giver of the gifts and the gifts. So let's look at...

2. What The Holy Spirit Does Through Us: The Gifts

The Gifts of The Holy Spirit are ways in which The Holy Spirit works through us! Paul helps us understand how The Holy Spirit works through us in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, our second text for the day!

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

1 Corinthians 12:2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

1 Corinthians 12:5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

1 Corinthians 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

1 Corinthians 12:10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

The Gifts have purpose!

Even though Paul lists some of the spiritual gifts in this passage, did you notice he was constantly telling them to keep the main thing the main thing? Different gifts but the same Spirit, same Lord, same God!

The gifts point people to Jesus! The gifts are from The Holy Spirit not you! The gifts are given for the common good! People are given different gifts as He determines! In verses 28-31 Paul says...

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

1 Corinthians 12:30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

1 Corinthians 12:31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

Wait a minute! Did Paul just say eagerly desire the greater gifts? Yes he did. And he had listed some pretty impressive gifts like, apostle, prophet, worker of miracles, speaking in tongues, but then he says desire the greater gifts and says now I'll show you the most excellent way... And what could that be? He then writes what has become known as the love chapter of the Bible. 1 Corinthians 13. Listen to what he says...

1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

1 Corinthians 13:5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

1 Corinthians 13:6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

1 Corinthians 13:7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

You see the gifts of The Holy Spirit are simply tools He uses in order to work through us to accomplish God's divine purposes and His Glory! And what could bring more glory to God than for us to use our God-given gifts to love God and to love others? In fact, every gift The Holy Spirit ever gives to anyone is in order that we might use that gift to love God, to love each other, and to even love our enemies. In fact, listen to what Paul said...

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Here's the sad thing: sometimes we get so caught up in who's got what gift, and we start comparing, and coveting, and being jealous of what God is doing in someone else's life that we take our eyes off Jesus. We start trying to use The Holy Spirit for what He can do for us selfishly and how He can make us look good in the eyes of others, rather than seeing what He can do through us to help others for the Glory of God! God's heart is broken over this! The Holy Spirit does want to give spiritual gifts to us and to empower us, and to bless us, but everything He does is to help us get closer to God and to help others do the same! We need to remember where we came from, lost sinners separated from a Holy God and what an amazing thing it is that God would be so gracious to accept us, forgive us and then allow His Holy Spirit to come and live in our hearts and lives. That God would allow His Holy Spirit to wash us and cleanse us and to fill us is so remarkable. And let's never forget that The Holy Spirit was given to us so that we would have power to be witnesses of Jesus' love and grace. As Paul said, you can have every spiritual gift on the planet, but if you don't have love you are nothing but a clanging

cymbal or a noisy gong. Sometimes Christians can be so arrogant and prideful that they forget this command and statement by Jesus...

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

It didn't say they will know you are His disciples by your amazing spiritual gift, super powers, church attendance, or religiosity! The greatest gift The Holy Spirit brings into our lives is the ability to love God and others! Okay, now think about this...

The disciples were facing very uncertain times. Even though they had seen Jesus resurrected, they had also witnessed the horror of His crucifixion, and now they had seen Him ascend back to heaven and that had to be amazing, but He was gone! All they had left was His promises to them. They were facing, on the one hand, the hostile religious establishment that had crucified Jesus, and on the other hand the pagan world of the Romans! You know they were scared, uncertain, worried, and confused! But they had a command from Jesus not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the Gift from God! I know there are different opinions on some of the things I'm about to say and that's okay. In Christ we can agree to disagree on many things and still love one another! Amen? Let's go to the actual event Jesus told His disciples to wait for.

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.

Acts 2:7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?"

Acts 2:8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?"

Acts 2:9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Acts 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

Acts 2:11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Acts 2:12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

"Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

Acts 2:15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Acts 2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

What an amazing story! Jesus had told His disciples they would receive the gift of The Holy Spirit and that He would empower them to live their lives in such a manner they would become witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and even to the whole world! Interestingly enough, this day had been foretold by the prophet Joel many years prior. What Jesus promised the disciples had been planned by God long before in history! This event was a turning point in God's work with humanity. Jesus had come to the earth and lived a perfect life so He could give the perfect sacrifice so humanity could be reconciled to God! Jesus had finished His work here on earth in the flesh and had ascended back to heaven. On the Day of Pentecost God sent His Spirit to continue the work of Jesus in His followers! Now it is so important for us to understand the cultural background to this story and why God chose the time and the way in which He initially gave His Holy Spirit to His followers. It's not that The Holy Spirit had not been at work in the world before the day of Pentecost. He had, but He had worked with individuals only at certain times and for certain situations. And in the Old Testament The Holy Spirit worked almost exclusively with prophets, priests, and kings. On the Day of Pentecost this changed in a magnificent way. Fishermen, reformed tax collectors, and just plain old common folks were invited to be witnesses and ambassadors to represent God in the world. Let me remind you how it is put in God's Word...

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

2 Corinthians 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...

And Peter reminds us of this...

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The cultural background of the Day of Pentecost is fascinating. T.C. Smith described it this way in the Broadman Commentary...

"The Jews of the Dispersion, those who lived in all parts of the known world outside Palestine, did not customarily attend the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem due to the unfavorable weather conditions at that season of the year. They usually waited until the Feast of Pentecost and participated with the Palestinian Jews in the festivities for that occasion. Thus Pentecost was the next important event on the Jewish calendar after Passover. Jerusalem was filled with Jews from all lands temporarily residing in the city.... What a strategic time for the manifestation of God's power in the community of believers!"

So now we see that God was being very intentional in the timing of the giving of His Holy Spirit. Now I want to address why God sent His Spirit in such a spectacular way. The Jewish people had become so steeped in the legalism of their religion they had missed the whole point of the law. And what was that?

Galatians 3:24 So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.
Galatians 3:25 Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.
Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,
Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

But the Jewish people were not going to easily give up their legalism. It had become entrenched in their lives. God knew this and that's why He had promised the gift would be accompanied with signs and wonders. These prophecies were specifically for the Hebrew people. That's why Paul reminded them of the Joel prophecy. And even with the miraculous things that accompanied the giving of The Holy Spirit, there were those who refused to believe. In fact they made fun of the disciples and said they had had too much wine. You've heard me say this before, but I don't know anyone who has had too much wine and all of a sudden becomes fluent in foreign languages! Oh, to be sure their language changes, but not in a good way!

What happened on the Day of Pentecost was a result of the desire of God to not only give a sign, but He wanted the people to hear the message of the Gospel. They said, "we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" "Declaring the wonders of God!" I believe that one statement is key to understanding why God gave us The Holy Spirit and why The Holy Spirit gives us gifts! It's all about declaring the wonders of God! Wonders like, His mercy, His grace, His forgiveness, His love, His power, His will, and His willingness to guide our lives each and every day! With that purpose in mind I want to take the moments we have left to share with you God's Word on just one of the spiritual gifts which The Holy Spirit sometimes uses to work through a believer's life. Are you ready? Here we go...

Tongues

First, let me say this. I do not have this gift. Years ago, as a young follower of Christ, I had many people tell me I needed this gift and it was God's will for all believers to have this gift. I sought the Lord on this matter with great sincerity and yielded my tongue, my mind, my heart, my

everything to God and told Him I was willing to be used in any way He wanted to use me and that included my tongue! He did not give me the gift of tongues. I didn't fully understand why He didn't but I trusted that He knew best. It wasn't until years later I realized not every gift is for everyone!

Paul said it very clearly in 1 Corinthians 12:29-30...

1 Corinthians 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?
1 Corinthians 12:30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

The implied answer to each of these is no, so you can't isolate the gift of tongues and say, "Oh, but that everybody's supposed to have that one!" So we know from Scripture that not every believer has the gift of tongues. I have many dear brothers and sisters in Christ who have this gift! I have great respect for them and thank God for His work in their lives! But it's not a gift I've been given. We know from Scripture there are three uses of speaking in tongues.

1. To share the gospel in another language.

This is found in our text on the day of Pentecost where each person could hear the good news of Christ in their own language.

2. A personal prayer language.

1 Corinthians 14:2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.

3. A prophetic utterance.

1 Corinthians 14:5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

Here's the deal, none of the spiritual gifts are bad, so Paul says he wouldn't mind if every single person spoke in tongues, but he goes on to say he would rather them prophesy. Why did he say that? Because prophecy, as we'll see next week, is more about proclaiming the love of God to others than it is about foretelling the future. Paul then says if anyone speaks in a tongue for everyone else to hear, then it requires an interpretation from someone with that spiritual gift so the church as a whole can benefit. I stand by that! We need to understand that...

Out of sixty six books of the Bible, the gift of tongues is only mentioned in three books. Mark 16:17, Acts chapters 2,10,19, and 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

Paul wrote twelve other books of the Bible after 1 Corinthians and never mentioned tongues again!

Peter never mentioned tongues; John never mentioned tongues; neither did Jude.

And your point is?

Always follow the Word of God when placing importance or priority on anything!

The gift of tongues is not a sign that you've received the Holy Spirit. Receiving the Holy Spirit is the sign that you've received Jesus! The gift of tongues in Acts 2 was a sign to the Jewish nation that God's prophecies had been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was given! However, the evidence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life is not a particular gift, but the fruit of the Holy Spirit which we find in Galatians 5:22-26...

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 gentleness and self-control...

Let's pray!